



# CGS PTO Newsletter November 2011

## Coventry Grammar School

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CGS PTO Newsletter  
November 2011

## A Memo From Marybeth Moyer, Principal

The changing leaves are now falling, and the weatherman predicts colder days ahead. November is here! We will extend the home-school connection this month with parent-teacher conferences on November 18, 21 and 22. These will be early release days (1:10 p.m.) for the students in afternoon kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2. Morning kindergarten students will dismiss at 10:40 a.m.

Conferences provide a unique opportunity to collaborate with your child's classroom teacher. The insights provided by these meetings can help both you and the teacher enhance your child's success in school. This year the teachers in K-5 will use a standards-based report card as the tool to share the information on your student's progress. A question that has been raised as we transitioned to this type of report card is "How will my child's progress be measured on a standards-based report card?"

A standards-based report card lists the most important skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade-level. Connecticut is one of many states that has adopted standards that students should learn at each grade-level from kindergarten through high school. These lists are the state content and learning standards. On standard-based report cards students receive marks that show how well they have met these standards. The marks will indicate whether the student has consistently met grade-level expectations, has demonstrated an understanding of skills and is working towards independence, has an emerging level of understanding or does not demonstrate understanding of basic skills at this time. Students will also get separate marks for their demonstrated work habits in their classroom instruction as well as their art, music and physical education classes.

On traditional report cards, students received one grade for reading, one for math, one for science and so on. On a standards-based report card, each of these subject areas is divided into a list of skills and knowledge content that students are responsible for learning at their grade-level. Students receive a separate mark for each standard. Standards-based report cards will provide more consistency among teachers than traditional report cards, because all students are evaluated on the same grade-appropriate skills. Parents can see exactly which skills their children have learned.

At CGS we encourage parents to take an active role at parent conferences. Report cards will be sent home on Monday, November 14. As you prepare for your child's conference the following guidelines may be helpful:

- Ask lots of questions! If there is anything about the report card that you don't understand or that is confusing, ask your child's teacher to explain. If you are not sure if your child is doing well, ask the teacher to explain the system. For example, if your child is emerging in some skills, ask the teacher if you should be concerned about his/her progress. Is he/she on track to meet the standard by the end of the year?
- Be sure you find out whether your child is completing assignments and developing good work habits. It is important for you to have a complete picture of your child's learning. If there is a problem with attitude, effort or study skills, parents and teachers need to work together to communicate and intervene as early as possible.
- Take advantage of the extra information. Standards-based report cards give you more detailed information about how your child is doing in each subject. You can use this information to help your child. If there is a skill you're concerned about, ask the teacher how you can help your child with it at home. You can also ask the teacher what additional support will be available at school.

Report cards are designed to communicate important information, and they need to be easy to understand and helpful to students and their families. Please refer to the enclosed pamphlet that will accompany your report card for additional information.



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(Principal - continued)

### **Important November Dates**

- **November 8-Election Day**-There will be no school for students. Coventry teachers will be involved in professional development throughout the district.
- **November 11- Veterans Day**- Schools will be closed to honor and pay tribute to veterans of all wars.
- **Thanksgiving Recess**- (Wednesday, **November 23**, will be an early release day. There will be no school on **November 24 and 25**.)

November is a time for thanks. At CGS, I am thankful for a dedicated and highly motivated staff, for the PTO that gives so much time and effort to support our students, for parents who are involved in their children's education and for their children who come to school ready to learn.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family!



As Thanksgiving approaches, children will be listening, reading, and participating in activities related to the history of the pilgrims and the Native Americans who helped them settle into the new land of America. Part of our uniqueness as a nation is due to the Native American people who were here before us.

## **Kindergarten News**

### **Kindergarten Team**

*Teachers: Wendy Bayer, Terry Bitwinski, Heidi Bosco, Eileen Hosey, and Debbie Hurlburt*

*Para-Educators: Debbie Carroll and Sue Lewis*

As Thanksgiving approaches, children will be listening, reading, and participating in activities related to the history of the pilgrims and the Native Americans who helped them settle into the new land of America. Part of our uniqueness as a nation is due to the Native American people who were here before us. Many of our foods (corn, squash and pumpkin), fashion (silver jewelry, ornamental beading), and arts (pottery, stone carving) have been influenced by Native Americans. In addition to teaching children about contributions to our culture, a study of the pilgrims and Native Americans can help young children think about the way people once lived in our country and the way we live now.

Kindergartners will celebrate the spirit of the first Thanksgiving with a "sharing" feast in their classrooms. Specific information will be available from your child's teacher. There will be a sign-up for donations during November conferences.

In mathematics, we explore numbers 0-10 as well as review skills and concepts previously presented. Children will count to find the number of objects or pictorial items in a group; represent numbers 0 to 10; read the number words *zero* to *ten*; write numerals; match quantities, numerals and number words to 10; and, identify and name the ordinal positions *first* to *fifth*. Students will also sort, classify and compare data in whole group and learning center activities.

Our trip for the months of November and December is a visit to the Booth & Dimock Library. The focus is on literature and storytelling. We look forward to visiting with Jennifer Needham, the children's librarian. If your child does not have his/her own library card, we encourage you to make the time to visit the Booth & Dimock as a family and take advantage of the opportunities available at our town library. Refer to the fall newsletter from the Booth & Dimock Library to get a glimpse of upcoming events. These newsletters are distributed quarterly and are a wonderful free resource for programs of all kinds from book discussion groups to new acquisitions to holiday celebrations to story times for children.

We are looking forward to meeting with parents/guardians at conference time. Take some time before the conference to jot down any questions or comments to discuss with your child's teacher. This first quarter of school has been a busy time for your child. Our mutual efforts on their behalf can only enhance their learning experience in kindergarten.



Our trip for the months of November and December is a visit to the Booth & Dimock Library.

## **First-Grade News**

### **First-Grade Team**

*Teachers: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Patricia Klaneski, Matthew Kyer, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber*

*Para-Educators: Laurie Darling and Jennifer Ray*

The winds of November bring many new themes to our first grade. We begin the month with some discussion about citizenship and our responsibility as voters. We will vote for stories, favorite snacks and lunch choices. Our upcoming Election Day provides us with an opportunity to recognize and appreciate our freedom, while Veterans Day is an opportunity to remember those people who protected our freedom.



As our fall months end, the children will continue to recognize the changes around us ...

(First Grade - continued)

Our country's history and traditions of Thanksgiving will also be a focus of study this month. We will include our study of nutrition and healthy food choices. Our first grades will gather together to share good food and friendship at our first grade feast in November. Parents will be called for donations for our feast.

In our reading program, some of our stories will celebrate the sights and sounds of a river, a large city, and a desert. We will be reading about other environments, some familiar and some new to us. Retelling continues to be a very big part of our guided-reading groups. When you read with your child, take time to think about the story and discuss what happened in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the story. We encourage the students to use character's names and "retell" the story to check for understanding of what has been read.

Thank you for your continued support of our reading program. Sharing books from school and practicing vocabulary words benefit the children in so many ways. We are "thankful" for our CGS parents.

As our fall months end - the children will continue to recognize the changes around us - bare branches, geese formations, and other animal preparations for cooler weather.

We are all looking forward to conference days and the opportunity to share your child's progress, growth, and adjustment in first grade. If you have not signed up for a conference, please contact your child's teacher.

## Second-Grade News

### Second-Grade Team

Teachers: Carolyn Bennett, Jerry Craig, Nancy Gwozdz, Erin Hazzard, Heather McPeck, Nancy Plaster, Angela Puccia, and Stephanie Wissler

Para-Educators: Gloria Barry and Heidi Holever

The month of November marks the busy holiday months ahead, and second grade is no exception. November is filled with both business and pleasure for our second graders. The close of the first quarter is approaching and report cards will be distributed on November 14. We all look forward to meeting with you during our first parent-teacher conference session (Nov. 18, 21 and 22) of the year. Please be sure to contact your child's teacher if you have not yet scheduled a conference. Please remember that these are early dismissal days.

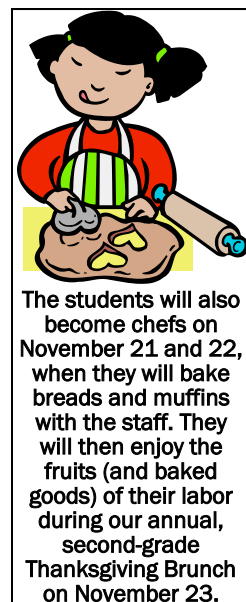
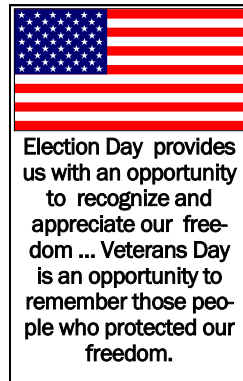
The students will also become chefs on November 21 and 22, when they will bake breads and muffins with the staff. They will then enjoy the fruits (and baked goods) of their labor during our annual, second-grade Thanksgiving Brunch on November 23. Further information will follow regarding supplies, ingredients and parent volunteers.

Recently in our math units, our students have enjoyed working with two and three dimensional shapes and measuring objects with both standard and nonstandard units. As we transition into our next unit, the students may practice these skills at home by estimating, then measuring actual real-life objects at home. These may be measured with rulers, tape measures, paper clips, or other household items. Our next unit will include number patterns and place value, where the goal is to identify 1, 10, and 100 more and less of up to 3-digit numbers.

Although we practice and revisit all of our reading and language arts skills throughout the entire year, November is the time when the second-grade students strengthen their sentence writing skills. Using accurate capitalization and punctuation in simple sentences lays the foundation for more detailed and "stretched" sentences. Please encourage your child to practice these with all writing at home. This month we will also master proper personal correspondence format through small group activities, the use of literature, and just plain writing letters. The students will be better prepared if they are familiar with their personal return address.

The students will continue to meet with their small, guided-reading books and discuss story elements. They will create story maps that include characters, setting, problems, solutions, and events in the story. These are wonderful questions to ask your child during nightly W.E.B. Reading.

The weather is still unpredictable and is becoming quite chilly. Students should always dress appropriately for an outdoor recess. While the layered look is now fashionable, it is also very practical for this time of year. Morning break times are frequently requiring outerwear, even on those warm and sunny days. From all of us in the second-grade hallway, we wish you a very happy and healthy Thanksgiving holiday!



## From Our School Nurse ~ Mrs. Paula Curtiss



Remind your children to cover their mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing with the crook of their arms ...  
Have your children throw out used tissues immediately...  
Keep your children home when they are sick to prevent spreading illness.

It is hard to believe we are heading into November and the beginning of the influenza or “flu” season. The flu is caused by the influenza virus, which infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs). Unlike the common cold the flu can cause severe illness.

The main way the flu spreads is in respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and infect someone nearby. It may also spread through indirect contact with contaminated hands and articles soiled with nose and throat secretions.

The time between exposure to the virus and when you start to feel sick is about 1-3 days. You can spread the flu before you feel sick, from the day before symptoms appear until seven days after the onset of the flu.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone six months or older should get the flu vaccine. Please consider getting yourselves and your children vaccinated. Talk with your doctor today about the types of vaccine available.

Some simple guidelines to promote good health during this flu season:

- Make sure your children have a good night’s sleep, drink plenty of water, eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
- Remind your children to **wash their hands** with soap and warm water frequently and **always** before eating.
- Remind your children to cover their mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing with the crook of their arms.
- Have your children throw out used tissues immediately.
- Keep your children home when they are sick to prevent spreading illness.
- Remind your children not to touch their eyes, noses or mouths as germs are often spread this way.

If at all possible, avoid close contact with other people who are sick.

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## From Our Reading Room ~



Reading interventions are in full swing in the Reading Room! Students in grades K-2 needing extra support in reading have begun their interventions.

### Reading Room Team:

*Carol Bittner, Jennifer Jones, Nan Kandolin, Jennifer Oberlin, Hannah Pietrantonio, Mary Talaga*

The Reading Room would like to extend a HUGE thank you to our generous PTO for funding our Dolphin Book Day on October 28, 2011! We would also like to thank our parent volunteers who stamped and distributed books to ALL the students at CGS. Giving a FREE book to every child at CGS is a valuable literacy event that encourages reading for pleasure.

Take a look at the updated Reading/Language Arts Tab under Academics on the Coventry Grammar School website. This is an informative webpage about the CORE Language Arts programs at our school. Parents can find links to help their child read at home. A leveled book list from Booth and Dimock Library is available. Thank you to Kathy Willett and Mrs. Hosey for sharing this helpful resource. Information about the Reading Room and Supporting Literacy Competence (SLC) program is also provided. Check back regularly! More literacy resources and reading news will be added monthly.

Reading interventions are in full swing in the Reading Room! Students in grades K-2 needing extra support in reading have begun their interventions. Some kindergarten and first-grade students are involved in phonological awareness skills groups. Some first graders are participating in our Supporting Literacy Competence (SLC) program. Some of our second graders are participating in focus reading groups for phonics, fluency, accuracy, and comprehension.

## From Our Friends at the Coventry Early Childhood Center

Have you ever thought about how much time you and your child spend in transit each day? Whether you drive a car, pedal a bicycle, take a bus, or walk, you and your child are together during that time. With a little planning, your journeys can become shared moments of fun and learning.

Before you go to the store, for example, involve your child in making a shopping list. You can ask your child to check the cereal boxes to see if any are almost empty. A four- or five-year old also can check on the supply of milk, extra rolls of toilet tissue, and other items. Later, you can consult this list together as you shop.

As you proceed on your errands, read signs around you. Take along paper and pencil for mapping out your stops. Help orient your child by pointing out stores and streets you pass along the way.

After a busy day at school, your child may need a break from the hustle of the schedule. Bring along a light snack or something cool to drink for the trip home. (Some items such as lollipops are not safe in the car or on the bus; choose snacks with care.) Usually it's a good idea to take a little quiet break before you begin discussing the day's events or focusing on the next stop.

On days when neither of you feels like talking, a couple of sing-along or storybook tapes, kept in an activity bag or backpack, will come in handy. Drawing materials, large dice, card games, small toys, puzzles, and books make great additions to a backpack.

Before a long trip, gather information and read about the destination to help your child look forward to the excursion. Together, map out points of interest along the way.

Games like I Spy, searching for animals, counting colored cars, matching sign shapes, finding silly-named streets, looking for out-of-state license plates, or inventing rhymes amuse away the miles.

When your child's attention begins to wander, switch to another game or take a break. Plan frequent stretch-and-bend stops to satisfy the wiggles. And don't forget that favorite pillow or stuffed animal.



Have you ever thought about how much time you and your child spend in transit each day? With a little planning, your journeys can become shared moments of fun and learning.

### 35th Annual Coventry Schools PTO Craft Show

Saturday, December 3, 2011  
Coventry High School  
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

\$2.00 Adult Admission  
\*\* Children Free \*\*

Over 60 Crafters, HUGE Bake Sale, Take-A-Chance Table and a luncheon served by the FCCLA Class

This is a wonderful community event and fundraiser for our schools!  
All proceeds from the Craft Show are shared equally among Coventry's four schools.

**Each school is responsible for a part of the show.**

#### **CGS – Bake Sale**

GHR – Set-up Friday Night, Crafters' Breakfast, Admission Tables

CNHMS – Take-A-Chance Table

CHS – Publicity, Senior Service, Clean-up

*If you are able to bake and/or work at the Bake Sale on December 3, and haven't already signed up, please email Beth Hassett at [bhassett5605@charter.net](mailto:bhassett5605@charter.net).*

Any questions regarding this year's Craft Show, please contact Laurie LaBrec (Chair) 742-0353.

## PTO News

We had another great turnout at our October meeting! We are grateful to all of you who have served or have signed up to serve on various committees for the many exciting events and activities we have coming up.

Our profit from the Book Fair has been determined to be \$2,239.72. That is an amazing amount of Scholastic dollars to be raised in under two hours time! These proceeds allow us to purchase books for Dolphin Book Days, where each student will be given a free book to take home. The first Dolphin Book Day is Friday, October 28, in conjunction with Storybook Character Day.

For those of you who were not yet aware, CGS has been adopted! That's right, we were chosen by BJ's of Manchester to be their adopted school for the year. They have generously donated \$500.00 to the PTO to assist in any way necessary throughout the year! Art Instructor, Mrs. Dubois, and your children made a beautiful thank-you banner that is hanging in the store, so please check it out! The PTO was also given two free memberships for the school year to be used for PTO needs and events. Please remember to support our local businesses and community who support our children and our schools!

By the time you read this we will have held our Family Fun Bingo night...a big hit with the whole family and a wonderful way to support CGS's Arts Department. Many thanks to all of the families that participated in our Fall Fundraisers with Lyman Orchards and Original Works. We look forward to determining the funds raised to help support technology in our classrooms, cultural arts programs and helping to defray the costs of field trips. The orders will be available for pickup on November 22 from 1:30-6:00pm. Those who signed up to sort and help with delivery this day will be contacted shortly. The fall Box Tops will be held October 31 through November 4. November 4 will also be Pajama Day for CCMC. A flyer will be coming home shortly. The Committees for Apples for Teachers, Teacher Appreciation during November conferences, and the joint PTO winter Bake/Craft Sale are working hard at gearing up for these events. Notifications will be coming home shortly about what, where and when the events are and how you can participate. To all those who've already signed up to volunteer, the chairpersons of each committee will be contacting you soon!

Other things we have been diligently plugging away at are our School Rewards Programs, Spirit Wear vendor and product availability and UConn Fundraisers which will all be discussed at our next meeting on Monday, November 7, 2011.

### HELP NEEDED

- Volunteers still needed to attend and report on Board of Ed meetings.
- Volunteers needed to chair and/or help with a BJ's membership fundraiser.

### PTO TREASURER'S REPORT - AS OF AUGUST 24, 2011

Beginning Balance	\$ 2,411.31
Income	\$ 3,159.72
Expenses	\$ 2,360.82
Ending Balance	\$ 3,210.21

**Haley Small, Co-President:** (860) 670-0137, [haleysmall@vzw.blackberry.net](mailto:haleysmall@vzw.blackberry.net)

**Leslie Ryan, Co-President:** (860) 742-8066, [imfweezin59@yahoo.com](mailto:imfweezin59@yahoo.com)

**Cathy Veerasammey, Secretary:** 860-742-6577, [catv3@yahoo.com](mailto:catv3@yahoo.com)

**Camilla Byam, Treasurer:** 860-742-8682, [camillabyam@hotmail.com](mailto:camillabyam@hotmail.com)

**Look for the CGS PTO on Facebook and become a member today!**

## ***Weather-Related/Emergency Closings, Delays, and Early Release Notifications***

Announcements regarding these closings, delayed openings, and early releases will be made via our ALERTNOW calling system. In addition to broadcasting this information on selected TV and radio stations, all student homes are now phoned by ALERTNOW. If families would like a list of the selected media outlets, please see the website at [www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org).

For an electronic copy of this newsletter, or for additional information about the Coventry Grammar School, please visit our website: [www.coventrypublicschools.org](http://www.coventrypublicschools.org).